

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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REGISTRATION, 1931

AN ALL-IMPORTANT REGISTER.

The registration period has again come round and we desire to impress upon the readers of the "Labour Organiser" the exceptional importance of the register now in preparation. The coming register will be in force during the vital period commencing 15th October next and ending 14th October, 1932. The odds that the General Election will be fought upon this register are pretty considerable, and Local Labour Parties should be taking no risks upon the matter.

At every election we have had contact with, the discovery has been made of large numbers of Labour electors entitled to be registered, but who have not been placed upon the electors' lists. This state of affairs applies even to divisions where it has been claimed that the registration work has been done by the officials in an exceptionally efficient manner. In spite of Form A and visitations it still appears that numbers of people escape the 'close drawn net', and in most cases these are Labour voters. In divisions where the official supervision is lax (and their name is legion) the position is often downright serious. In short, the number of claims to be made in practically every division to-day far exceeds the number ever to be made in the days when registration was deemed the prime function of political agents and parties. There are enough people left off the register in many constituencies to turn the scale of its representation.

The question is: What is your Party going to do about it? Are you and is your Party satisfied to dilly-dally in this matter leaving the discovery about lost votes to be made when the General Election is upon us? Where are those people who call for ACTION? Now is the time for action. The days are long, which is all to the good, but the weeks are short, and there are very few of them before all opportunity for making good is gone past.

Registration work of some kind can be done in every constituency. The ideal thing is a special canvass well organised in time, and carried through to

completion not later than a week after the new lists are published. If this course is contemplated there is time in which to convene meetings, mobilise workers and plan out the streets so that at least every house in every working class area will be visited.

It will be remembered of course that the electors' lists consists of three parts (1) the old register, (2) the list of people to be freshly placed upon the register, and (3) the list of people to be taken off the register. It would be a simple task if one could take these lists round to every house and check them upon the spot. This, of course, cannot be done, and some system must therefore be devised for obtaining information at each house, and comparing it with the register.

The simplest plan is for the workers to carry with them small notebooks for entering upon each page the particulars of the voters to be found at each house. A page should be given to each house. An elaboration of this procedure is to have cards or punch-holed loose-leaf sheets for each house, in which case there is a record that will serve for checking in several years to come.

The point to concentrate on is enquiry concerning the dwellers in a house other than the householder and his wife. It is just here that Labour losses come in. Practically every person over twenty-one years of age who is a lodger or son, or daughter, is entitled to the Parliamentary vote. Those who rent a room unfurnished are entitled to the Local Government vote in addition, as also is the husband or wife of such person. It is an almost invariable thing to find that the proportion of sons and daughters on the register in middle class areas is far higher than in working class areas. This clearly shows where the leakage takes place.

Of course not every Local Party will be able to carry out a canvass, though the work is by no means unpleasant, and it affords an excellent opportunity for distributing literature and augmenting membership. But at least every Party ought to be able to ensure that

each one of its Polling District Committees meets to attempt something in regard to the register.

If whole areas cannot be canvassed the most favourable areas should be covered, and where there is not time or sufficient energy for this purpose the register should be gone through street by street and name by name. Local knowledge is a powerful asset in this work. The man or woman who can do nothing else can at any rate go through the part of the register for the parish he knows best, and make a list of queries concerning the persons whom he or she imagines to be left off the register. It is not enough for one person to go through the register, but every person with local knowledge should do so.

There is little doubt that if a canvass is made, or the register carefully examined, a large number of queries will result, and out of these there will be a large number of people to be placed upon the register.

Now if the canvass or examination of the lists is delayed too long, there will be no time left to deal properly with the queries. In considering the organisation of any campaign provision must be made for dealing with the visitation of "queries" and the making of claims in time.

The all-important thing to bear in mind is that *the last day for claims to be registered is August 7th*. It is not generally known that so long as they are delivered at the appropriate address before mid-night they are in time, but if the place is shut up there must be proof of delivery.

As is now well known, persons whose occupation may prevent them from voting in the ordinary way may claim to be placed upon the Absent Voters' List, and thus be enabled to vote by post. In some constituencies insufficient activity has been shown by our side in taking advantage of this provision. It applies of course to persons already on the register, but a claim to be treated as an absent voter must be made on the appropriate form by August 18th.

In Scotland registration dates differ from those in England and Wales. The qualifying period there ends on June 15th, the publication of electors' lists is on August 8th, and the last day to be registered is August 22nd. The last day for claims as absent voters is September 1st.

THE ROLL OF HONOUR REVISED.

By HINLEY ATKINSON.

The "Labour Organiser" is to be heartily congratulated on its enterprise in publishing a Membership Roll of Honour. Our members, especially officers and key workers, are keenly interested in the membership achievements of other Parties, and it is desirable that this information should be available from time to time without the inconvenient reference to annual reports.

There are, however, serious objections to a Roll of Honour based on membership without regard to the size and type of the constituencies included.

A constituency with a membership of 2,000 and an electorate of 80,000 cannot be regarded as having developed its membership as successfully as the constituency having the same membership with only 50,000 electorate.

More important still is the relation of membership numbers to the Labour vote. Every Labour voter is a potential member, and it is therefore reasonable to say that the constituency which has 2,000 members and a Labour vote of only 12,000 is entitled to a much higher place on the Roll of Honour than a Party having the membership but a 20,000 Labour vote.

Basing the order of merit on these criteria I have ventured to revise the Roll of Honour for the interest of your readers. Some startling changes in the order of merit have resulted. Taking the relation to registered electors, Carlisle takes first place instead of tenth, Romford fifteenth instead of third. Passing to membership in relation to Labour votes, Buckingham takes first place instead of ninth, Oldham twelfth instead of second. The appended table gives many changes equally startling.

It is not the object of this article to assess the relative value of a membership in proportion to electors as against its proportion to Labour votes, but to point out that either or both provide a better basis of merit than neither. Where, of course, the ratio is equally high in both categories, as in the case of Carlisle, Buckingham and South Poplar, it should command a higher relative place than, say, East Ham or Faversham where there is a wide divergence in the two categories.

The implication of this reasoning is that there may be several Parties with

a membership of less than 2,000 entitled to inclusion in the Roll of Honour. To give one example, the Mile End constituency of London with 1,634 members, 11,489 Labour votes and 34,662 electors, has a proportionate strength of one member to 7.03 Labour votes and one member to 21.2 electors. This achievement would give Mile End sixth place in the Roll of Honour in relation to the Labour vote and third place in relation to the electorate.

One other test of real membership is desirable, though perhaps impossible to apply at present. This is the financial test. A "paper" membership of a membership paying a nominal contribution should not rank as high as a membership with a high percentage of fully-paid members. Can, for example, any Party beat the record of South Poplar in this respect? For the year ending December, 1930, this Party with 3,000 members had an income of £441 8s. 10d. from membership contributions. Taking the annual rate of con-

tribution at 4/- the average contribution works out at 73.5 or almost 3/- per member. Can you beat it?

HOW TO HELP THE "L.O."

Mr. J. S. Middleton, Assistant Secretary of the Labour Party, in circularising Local Labour Parties throughout the country says—the wise Party official, the informed Party agent, the active ward secretary, the intelligent executive members — all should subscribe to the "Labour Organiser" in order to keep abreast of organisation and electoral and local affairs concerning the Party.

Will our readers help us to rub this home by endeavouring to increase the sale of the "Labour Organiser?" There are all too many Local Labour Parties who bemoan their want of success, but who never seek to take a page from the experience of others such as is contained in the "Labour Organiser."

| Order on Roll of Honour | CONSTITUENCY | No. of Individual Members | No. of Registered Electors, 1929 | Labour Vote, General Election, 1929 | Proportionate Strength of Membership | | Order of Merit in Relation to | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | To Registered Electors | To Labour Vote | No. Registered Electors | No. Labour Votes |
| 1 | Woolwich, E. and W.† ... | 4,424 | 92,822 | 37,411 | One in 20.9 | One in 8.4 | 5 | 9§ |
| 2 | Oldham* ... | 3,500 | 95,109 | 34,223 | " 27.1 | " 9.7 | 14 | 12 |
| 3 | Romford ... | 3,400 | 98,577 | 31,045 | " 28.9 | " 9.1 | 15 | 11 |
| 4 | South Poplar ... | 3,000 | 47,845 | 19,696 | " 15.9 | " 6.5 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | E. Lewisham ... | 2,874 | 76,562 | 22,806 | " 26.6 | " 7.9 | 13† | 8 |
| 6 | Greenwich ... | 2,704 | 62,342 | 20,328 | " 23 | " 7.5 | 8 | 6 |
| 7 | Reading ... | 2,654 | 62,873 | 23,281 | " 23.6 | " 8.7 | 9 | 10 |
| 8 | Deptford ... | 2,600 | 71,242 | 26,848 | " 27.4 | " 10.3 | 16 | 14 |
| 9 | Buckingham Mon. ... | 2,500 | 44,972 | 11,718 | " 17.9 | " 4.6 | 3 | 1 |
| 10 | Carlisle ... | 2,480 | 34,993 | 12,779 | " 14.1 | " 5.1 | 1 | 2 |
| 11 | Faversham ... | 2,380 | 52,047 | 15,275 | " 21.8 | " 6.4 | 7 | 3 |
| 12 | East Bristol... .. | 2,368 | 47,039 | 24,197 | " 19.8 | " 10.2 | 4 | 13 |
| 13 | Newport, Mon. ... | 2,206 | 56,392 | 18,653 | " 25.5 | " 8.4 | 10 | 9§ |
| 14 | N. Salford ... | 2,200 | 46,938 | 17,333 | " 21.3 | " 7.8 | 6 | 7 |
| 15 | Southampton* ... | 2,172 | 103,653 | 32,249 | " 47.7 | " 14.8 | 17 | 16 |
| 16 | East Ham N. ... | 2,086 | 46,165 | 13,969 | " 22.1 | " 6.6 | 11 | 5 |
| 17 | York ... | 2,023 | 53,989 | 20,663 | " 26.6 | " 10.2 | 13† | 13 |
| 18 | North Tot- tenham ... | 2,000 | 52,399 | 20,884 | " 26.1 | " 10.4 | 12 | 15 |

† Two Parliamentary seats.

* Two Member seats.

† E. Lewisham ties with York.

§ Woolwich ties with Newport.

|| York ties with E. Bristol.

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WATCHING THE ENEMY

Too little importance is often attached to systematic observation of the tactics and activities of the Liberal and Tory organisations in the constituencies. It is not enough, however, that Labour should go on in its own sweet way making converts where it can, but taking no note of the work of its opponents, the extent to which such work succeeds, and any damage inflicted by it.

The tactics in political warfare often have a military analogy. What military commander could afford to ignore the activities of the enemy or dispense with the reports of his scouts and intelligence department?

It is quite true that the initiative should not be allowed to pass into the hands of one's opponents, and no Party should wait for the enemy to set the pace; but an observation of Liberal and Tory activities and the formulation of schemes to defeat them does not mean that the Local Party is to always act on the defensive. On the contrary a knowledge of the enemy's doings helps in planning attack, and the acts of our opponents themselves often enable us to deal them the shrewdest blows.

Every executive and every Labour agent and secretary should endeavour to be well informed concerning the enemy, and a general appreciation by the Party of what is expected of the members is a very useful thing. In between elections such knowledge is of importance, but during an election the matter becomes all important. Yet quite recently we came across an occasion where the enemy had issued a slashing attack in a broad sheet published two or three days before the poll. No member of the Party thought of taking a copy to the committee rooms, and when knowledge of the issue was actually established no less than three workers "writing-up" at the committee rooms confessed to having received a copy and placing it behind the fire! Precious time was lost in securing a copy of the document which it was found necessary to reply to by a special leaflet.

An election agent is well advised to make special arrangements with his workers to ensure that his intelligence department never fails him. He requires copies of the enemy's literature immediately copies are procurable. He also requires copies of posters; information as to the sort of display made by them. This may necessitate several

reports from different parts of the constituency in a County Division. If the enemy publishes a list of meetings such list is immediately required, and incidentally our opinion is that lists of meetings covering more than a week or even a week, do not pay the side which issues them. They constitute a disclosure of one's movements, and convey information as to the centres being played on, particularly when accompanied by the names of speakers. Such information often enables the more mobile Party to counter indoor meetings with outdoor fixtures. Nor does premature list of meetings help the attendances as it might be expected to do. In short, secrecy and surprise are as essential a part of electioneering tactics as they are of military tactics, and the agent who well advertises his meetings but gives no premature disclosure of where he is going to hold them scores over the other Party. For the same reason we never care about giving to the Press the names of speakers who are coming into the division until it becomes desirable to advertise them.

Information concerning the enemy's doorstep work is another matter of profound importance. We know of a case where all sides had completed their canvass, but one side decided on a lightning third canvass two or three days before the poll. It was mightily effective, but immediate information of the move would have enabled the agent to take better steps to counter it.

The stories told by Liberal and Tory canvassers should also be reported. Clear evidence is frequently to be obtained that the enemy canvassers have been prompted to say on the doorstep things which speakers dare not utter on the platform. And these tactics are insidious and successful unless steps are early taken to counter them.

It is just as important to know what is being said by speakers at meetings, and those who attend enemy meetings will render greater service by taking accurate note of what is said than by disorder and interruptions.

In a Borough Division the election agent is generally soon aware of the opening of enemy committee rooms, but in a County Division knowledge of where the enemy have opened rooms and of the date they are open often discloses evidence of their strength and

intentions, particularly if the personnel manning the rooms is known.

This question of personnel is also important. The knowledge of what prominent people are coming forward in support, or of what prominent people are sulking in their tent is often useful. It affords sometimes the opportunity of driving a wedge into the enemy ranks.

Though election petitions are not particularly popular, it can be said with truth that vast sums have been paid by political parties in the past to collect information *after* an election, which with a wide awake intelligent department might have been collected far more easily *during* an election. Whether one is able to lodge a petition or no the illegal acts of the enemy should be carefully noted, dated and recorded. Some of them call for immediate action by the election agent. As for instance the engagement of a prohibited committee room; the use of a prohibited vehicle on polling day; intimidation or improper conduct at the polling station; allegations of bribery or treating; alleged illegal employment or the issue of illegal literature etc., etc. In none of these matters is a moment's delay permissible in conveying information to the agent, yet one can always discover the man after the election who can narrate stories of illegal acts which he alleges the enemy have indulged in, but which he has failed to report in time to the proper quarter.

Though our remarks so far have been principally directed to observation and report of enemy activities at election times, it is no less necessary to possess a live intelligence department all the year round.

One of our opponents, for instance, may decide on a general house to house distribution of literature. This is a matter that should not only be reported, but discussed by the executive, for it calls for immediate efforts in the same direction. A summer campaign or a series of meetings by the enemy are also matters of importance to be reported, discussed and countered. The enemy may engage in a canvass. That is of importance to the Party. The Tory or Liberal member or candidate may be announced at a series of garden parties, at At Homes; a big bazaar may be announced, or even a series of cottage meetings. The Party which does not know these things and realise the possibilities of such activities attracting support which our own Party

ought to get, is indeed blind to its own interests.

Certain constituencies are flattered from time to time by the visit of front rank speakers from the other side. Some constituencies are often mere platforms for speeches intended for wider consumption. Report of such enemy activities is not merely one for the local executive, but a report should be made to Party headquarters. National campaigns are planned with the activities of the enemy well in mind.

From what we have said it should be clear to all that far more attention should be paid in future to the doings of the enemy, and in each constituency some attempt should be made to inform workers of what is expected of them from time to time in this respect.

GOODBYE, PESSIMISM.

On to Victory.

The Stroud By-election is a complete answer to Labour pessimists. In a constituency of many difficulties, with the Tory Party fighting at its own chosen time, and on its own chosen ground, Labour, notwithstanding the handicap of its candidate being abroad during nearly one half of the contest, came out of the contest with flying colours. The net result was a small reduction in the Tory vote, a landslide in the Liberal vote and an actual increase in the Labour vote.

With the exception of Kilmarnock in November, 1929, and North Norfolk in July, 1930, where increases in the Labour vote were shown of 1,197 and 277 respectively, Stroud is the only By-election to show an increased Labour vote since the General Election. But in the case of both the above exceptions the Liberal Candidate had dropped out.

The result at Stroud may therefore be taken as confirming the view we expressed a few months ago that Labour had steadily improved its position in the country from the time of the Llandudno conference. There is a good deal of evidence to show that not only has bottom been touched, but that Labour prospects are distinctly on the upgrade. It is time now for every Party to make short work of the prophets of defeat and to concentrate on the consolidation of Labour forces and preparations for the General Election which is steadily drawing nearer.

100,000 LIMBS FOR LONDON LABOUR.

We are interested to note that at a Conference recently held in London it was unanimously decided to hold an All-London Individual Membership Campaign from September 6th to September 9th. Every Borough and Divisional Labour Party is to engage in this big push, the object of which is to multiply by two and a half the present Individual Membership of the Party in London. London in short is out for an individual membership of 100,000, the present membership being about 40,000.

At the last election nearly 800,000 Labour votes were recorded. A membership of 100,000 is a proportion of one member for every eight Labour voters. The big push should therefore succeed, and the number named will eventually prove a starting point for another forward step. We heartily wish the campaign success, and urge our London readers to participate in the campaign to the very fullest extent.

THE LABOUR YEAR BOOK, 1931.

We are extremely happy that the "Labour Year Book, 1931" has come to hand. It puzzles us how any active worker in the Labour Movement can manage to rub along without being in possession of this wonderful source of accurate and reliable information and detailed facts and figures.

There are nearly six hundred pages in the 1931 Year Book and the various sections into which the volume is divided conveniently classify the interests on which information is given. The book gives the fullest possible information and data concerning the British Labour Movement and its principal working parts. "Labour in Industry" claims fifty-four pages of intensive information, while voluminous information is given concerning "Labour in Parliament," "International Labour," "Social Services," "Public and Local Finance," etc., etc. The directories of British and International Labour alone occupy forty-five pages.

Altogether the "Labour Year Book, 1931," is an invaluable compendium and an indispensable companion for the Labour worker whether political or industrial. The prices are, paper 3/6, cloth 5/-.

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PRINTING

COMPUTING AND CHECKING QUANTITIES.

One of the minor qualities in the successful secretary or agent is that of being able to avoid waste in printing, and to accurately compute the quantities required. The waste of printed matter at elections has almost passed into a by-word, yet there is a distinct improvement in this matter so far as Labour contests are concerned. There remains, however, much to be learned on this question, and not only locally, but nationally too, for up till quite recently there existed in several parts of the country big dumps of wasted leaflets concerning a famous national campaign of a few years ago. Someone then badly miscalculated.

Under-printing however, is as bad and as expensive as over-printing, and there are few elections where one error or the other is not committed in respect of some of the material used. These are also common faults in all the year round organisation. Hence this article.

It should be an axiom in ordering printing for distribution that the quantities ordered should approximate to the capacity of the organisation to effectively distribute it. This factor is sometimes not considered at all, though more often it is the calculation itself which goes wrong.

An instance where this consideration never entered the head of the person who gave the order came under our notice a few years ago at a certain by-election where the candidate himself (an efficient Trades Union Organiser but quite out of his element in election work) ordered ten thousand copies each of six sorts of leaflets—a total of sixty thousand leaflets to be got rid of within five days in a big county division; and the machine was already clogged with other matter for distribution.

An instance where the axiom was remembered but the capacity of the Party hopelessly miscalculated occurred where another agent in an electorate of fifty thousand ordered twenty thousand window cards. His workers certainly would be able to distribute that quantity—at meetings and elsewhere—but not one in five would be used for the purpose intended. Five thousand cards distributed while on canvass from house to house would have been more effective and cheaper.

In fixing the quantity regard *must* be had to other matter on hand, and to

certain other factors which a moment's thought will readily show enter into any calculation. Thus, taking window cards as an instance again, the *type* of constituency matters. Cards will not be displayed nor can they be distributed so readily in scattered areas as in compact streets; tenement houses and flats are equally unpropitious ground as are shopping centres and villa residences. The total electorate is obviously the wrong basis to work on. Further, if the cards are ready *before* the canvass commences the quantity needed will be higher; the quantity will be higher too where the candidate is personally popular, and where enthusiasm runs high.

If the arrangements for effective distribution of the printing in bulk to different centres are good, matter for distribution can be ordered more plentifully. Unfortunately over-ordering and bad distribution often goes together. If bulk distribution is good retail distribution will be better.

Effective printing and well drawn up matter will also be distributed better than poor stuff and hence may be ordered more freely.

Even the finest election machine jibs at distributing poor printing; it is always the dulllest and most uninviting stuff which gets left in the dumps.

The Address is nowadays normally distributed through the free post. In fixing the quantity required the usual method is to calculate the number of electors and to have a margin for distribution to the Committee Rooms; and, notwithstanding this, in more cases than not something goes wrong. Where workers have practically open access to the places where folding and filling is done there is invariably a certain leakage and spoilage of the better literature. But this does not explain the frequent short quantities. The explanation is rather to be sought in the *lack of check upon the printer's deliveries*.

The local printer is very prone to short quantities. Further, the more elaborate and high class the work—such as the production of half tone blocks, etc.,—the greater will be the spoilage in printing. Even a high class firm with a reputation at stake will deliver short quantities, though not ordinarily without disclosing the fact. Many printers protect themselves by

the following entirely indefensible and one-sided clause printed in small type on their written estimates :—

"Every endeavour will be made to deliver the correct quantity ordered, but, owing to the difficulty of producing the exact quantities estimates are conditional upon a margin of 5 per cent. (in colour work 10 per cent.) being allowed for overs or shortage, the same to be charged for or deducted pro rata to the cost of paper, printing and warehouse work, and exclusive of cost of composition."

It will be seen from this clause that on an order of fifty thousand election addresses one may actually be two thousand five hundred copies short (and the deduction to be made in the charge is not even proportionate). Fortunately in election work the masters printers' model clause as above is not always used, and election agents can defeat it by stipulating on their orders for *the exact quantity as ordered* to be delivered.

As to checking printers' quantities: we cordially detest the habit of some printers of sending in "supplies" of printed stuff. If orders are placed in time and too many orders are not given to one printer, costs will be reduced and printing should be delivered as required properly numbered and packed. But it is not safe to take even a thousand handbills from some printers without examination. It is not necessary to count more than sufficient to obtain a basis for weighing. The scales should do the rest of the work, and they will unerringly discover the printer who is cheating you—unless the printer has changed the quality and weight of the paper he is using, for which offence a look out should be kept.

With regard to printing other than election work, the principal items are meetings posters or handbills, tickets of one kind or another, leaflets for distribution, bazaar programmes and party stationery. In ordering posters the mistake should not be made of allowing the printer to deliver direct to the billposter. There is no check on quantities this way, and further, some posters are invariably required for the use of individual supporters, specific display and for filing. Most Parties should by now have a clear knowledge of the quantity of posters that can be effectively displayed in their area, and they will order accordingly—plus the margin just mentioned.

In ordering tickets for sale regard has always to be had to the selling capacities of the persons who will dispose of them. We have known it necessary to have out for sale as many as four or five times the quantity of tickets one hoped to eventually dispose of. On the other hand with good sellers and a popular event the margin of tickets ordered over and above what one can sell would be very slight. This is purely a matter for local knowledge, and discretion in each case. Numbered tickets are a check on quantity and a check on the sellers. It is nearly always worth numbering.

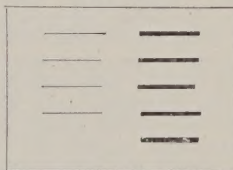
A word with reference to the use of skeleton bills for posters or handbills, a device by which many Parties seek to reduce cost. We do not like this idea at all. The essence of an announcement is its freshness, vitality and pull, but repetition outline has neither. Effectiveness and cheapness is better secured by ordering small quantities of written posters or by duplicating circulars instead of using handbills.

100 PER CENT POSTERS.

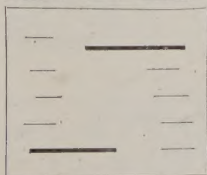
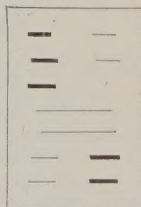
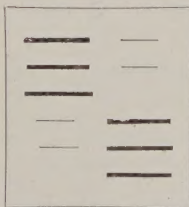
(Concluded from last month.)

Balance explains itself. It means symmetry. It is obviously wrong to put all the heavy type on one side of the poster, and all the light type on the other side. Balance shows itself in the diagrams explaining lay-out.

This shows lack of balance.



Here are a few examples of balance.



Cost is obviously an item requiring close attention. Cut out every redundant word. Type setting costs money. Black ink is cheaper than coloured. Common abbreviations such as Col. for Colonel, Mon. for Monday, are quite legitimate. Chairman, Mr. Bennett, is not only briefer, but better than "Mr. Bennett will take the chair." "Public meeting to be addressed by Rt. Hon. George Lansbury, M.P., P.C.," can be shortened to "Rt. Hon. Geo. Lansbury speaking," without the slightest loss of effectiveness. Asking for an estimate first almost invariably reduces the price. A diagram drawn to scale will reduce it, too, for the printer doesn't need to lose time guessing what you want. Other small economies which can be effected are, keeping the name of the member or candidate ready set up, using standard sizes of paper, keeping to one colour of ink and changing the paper when different colours are required (machine washing charges are saved) using space instead of lines to subdivide the matter. Rules take a little longer to set than space. If you can discuss with the printer the price and how he gets at it, you will, after a little practice be able to suggest tactfully to him where he can reduce his costs. It is the unknown "guessing" that he allows for. If you reduce that to a minimum his charges correspondingly come down.

One last word. Do not imagine for a moment that poster advertising of itself will bring membership and money and influence. Just as a smart shop, reasonable prices, good service, and public spirit co-ordinate the efforts of the poster advertising goods, so regular membership collection, regular business, social, and propaganda meetings must back up and make effective the work done by posters. No amount of skilful advertising can make a bad article good, or sell it for long. No amount of skilful advertising can make a Labour Party "go" which party neglects its business. It is not a case of advertising versus organisation, but a case of advertising plus organisation.

Finally, brethren, as St. Paul would say: Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things are lovely—advertise them!

Next month's "L.O." is full of exceptionally useful hints!

POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS.

(Concluded from last month.)

Now as regards polling places in Local Government Elections the Mayor in a Borough is required to allot the polling places. There is no appeal against his decision.

In a County Council Election the Returning Officer allots the polling places. There is no appeal against his decision.

In a Metropolitan Borough Council Election, Urban or Rural District Council Election more again detailed provisions exist, but the returning officer is the authority in each case and there is no appeal against his decision. It is necessary to give the provisions in extenso.

Metropolitan Borough Councils.

"The returning officer shall appoint the polling place for the ward, or if the ward is divided into polling districts for each polling district, and shall determine the number of polling stations at each polling place.

Provided as follows:—

- (a) No premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor shall be used for a polling station.
- (b) Where the number of local government electors in the ward or, if the ward is divided into polling districts, in any polling district is not more than seven hundred only one polling station shall be provided for the ward or polling district; and so on for each additional seven hundred local government electors, or for any less number of local government electors over and above the last seven hundred."

Urban District Councils.

"The returning officer shall fix the polling place for the district or if the district is divided into polling districts for each polling district, and determine the number of polling stations at each polling place.

"Provided as follows:—

- (a) No premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor shall be used for a polling place;
- (b) Where the number of local government electors in the Urban District, or, if the district is divided into polling districts, in any polling district is not more than five hundred, only one polling station shall, unless the County Council otherwise direct, be provided for the

Urban District or polling district; and so on for each additional five hundred local government electors, or for any less number of local government electors over and above the last five hundred."

Rural District Councils.

"The returning officer shall determine the situation of the polling place for the parish or, if the parish is divided into polling districts, of the polling place for each such district, and the number of polling stations at each polling place.

"Provided as follows:—

- (a) No premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor shall be used for a polling station;
- (b) The same polling stations shall be used for the election of Rural District Councillors and of any Parish Councillors to be elected at the same date in the parish;
- (c) Where the number of local government electors in the parish, or, if the parish is divided into polling districts, in any polling district, is not more than five hundred, only one polling station shall, unless the County Council otherwise direct, be provided for the parish or polling district; and so on for each additional five hundred local government electors, or for any less number of local government electors over and above the last five hundred."

Readers who have followed carefully the details given above will have observed the strong trend toward making the polling district uniform for all purposes. When this is done the helplessness in the face of insufficient local arrangements is largely removable because one has only to proceed to get Parliamentary polling districts or places altered. In actual practice arrangements to this end are always facilitated when a spirit of *bonhomie* exists between the registration officials and the local Party officials. A word in time in the right quarter will often save a torrent of regrets after a division has been made.

LABOUR LIMBS

for POWER

HENDON'S EXAMPLE.

The steady progress of individual membership in the Hendon Division is well illustrated by the following table which we have extracted from a particularly lucid and full annual report.

| Year. | No. of Ind. Members. | Ind. Fees | | Fees pd. to Natl. Pty. | |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| | | Received. | | £ s. d. | |
| | | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. |
| 1924 | 301 | 31 | 5 0 | 1 | 10 0 |
| | | | | Double Fee. | |
| 1925 | 540 | 34 | 17 6 | 9 | 0 0 |
| 1926 | 550 | 29 | 13 2 | 4 | 11 8 |
| 1927 | 550 | 23 | 15 6 | 4 | 11 8 |
| 1928 | 680 | 62 | 12 2 | 5 | 13 4 |
| 1929 | 1038 | 65 | 13 4 | 8 | 13 0 |
| 1930 | 1250 | 81 | 5 8 | 18 | 15 0 |

The report states that there is little doubt the increase in fees and membership is due to the scheme of periodical collection of members' subscriptions in connection with the new Party membership cards. It is stated that the issue of stamps by the National Party is very much appreciated in some of the wards. The Hon. Secretary of the Hendon D.L.P. is Mr. G. R. Richardson, of 19, Sunningfields Road, London, N.W.4. Mr. F. B. Hayward is the Organising Secretary of this Party.

WILL A SECRETARY GO TO HEAVEN?

If the Secretary writes a letter, it's too long.

If he sends a postal it's too short.

If he doesn't send a notice, he is lazy.

If he attends a committee meeting, he is butting in.

If he stays away, he is a shirker.

If he duns the members for dues, he is insulting.

If he fails to collect the dues, he is slipping.

If he asks for advice, he is incompetent.

If he does not, he is a bull-head.

If he writes his reports complete, they are too long.

If he condenses them, they are incomplete.

If he talks on a subject, he is trying to run things.

If he remains quiet, he has lost interest in the meetings.

"Ashes to ashes,

Dust to dust,"

If others won't do it,

The Secretary must.

—"The Railroad and Home News."



QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

A Widow's Qualification.

Question. A man dies during the qualifying period and his widow continues living in the house up to and after June 1. Is she entitled to registration?

Answer. This is a question which we note was set under the Labour Party Scheme for Study and Examination. We do not ordinarily answer these queries in the pages of the "Labour Organiser," but as the point is of some interest we will make an exception in our correspondent's favour.

The question itself leaves something to be presumed; we are to suppose that the occupier was the husband and not the wife—this latter point would make a considerable difference to the reply. The word "registration" of course covers both the Parliamentary and Local Government vote.

The husband's death makes no difference to the widow's Parliamentary qualification. The Parliamentary vote is based on residence (or the occupation of business premises). It appears in this case, the widow has resided during the whole of the qualifying period in the dwelling house in question and she is therefore entitled to a Parliamentary vote. Her qualification in this respect is entirely independent of her late husband.

In regard to the Local Government vote a wife's qualification is dependent on the husband's "occupation" as owner or tenant of land or premises and vice versa. If the husband or the wife dies the ground on which qualification rests disappears and the surviving partner is not entitled to be registered.

The above point has been clearly recognised on many occasions and an attempt was made to rectify the position while the Representation of the People Act, 1928, was going through Parliament. An amendment was in fact introduced by Mr. Rhys Davies,

M.P. The amendment was however, ruled out of order on the ground that it was an amendment of existing law and not an assimilation of the franchise within the preamble of the Bill.

In some districts an arrangement exists between the political Parties by which no objection is made to a widow's name remaining on the register provided she is still occupying the premises and would ordinarily herself become qualified by occupation in due course. An instance where an arrangement of the kind exists was given in the "Labour Organiser" for September, 1925.

A Rural Problem.

Question. Our Division is a very hard one to organise. In twenty miles of a truly rural part of the Division we have not got a single polling district committee, and every attempt to set them up has failed. Can you offer any suggestions as we feel this end of the Division is getting out of our hands. We can win the Division if the other part of it was fairly solid, but this agricultural country beats us. The places are so scattered. There are no really big villages and the means for getting about are very bad.

Answer. This problem is not a new one, nor by any means confined to our correspondent's constituency. Our town ideas of organisation do not adapt themselves to countryside conditions, and the only places where they do seem to fit the circumstances is in those parts where intensive agriculture is the order of the day, and the number of land workers to the farm is relatively high. A big part of the country however, is to-day in a condition where rural labour is sparse, and it is one of these places to which our friend refers, and which is so difficult to organise.

That in spite of the absence of structural organisation a considerable degree of support for Labour is latent in these

parts has been evidenced again and again. It is a grave mistake to leave this support to languish until election times. Some contact, at any rate, can be kept in the summertime by flying corps of speakers to village greens, and by women's trips for the distribution of literature. But in our opinion a more effective way of holding the countryside is to be found. The names of supporters should be collected, and this is not an impossible task, for even in the case of the Party mentioned we know that they have records of supporters in practically every polling district. Some of these people can be induced to act as correspondents, and through them can be sent every month copies of the "Citizen" of which a thousand copies are to be obtained for 7/6. This percolation of the rural areas is the finest method of reaching them that we know of. Rural minds are turned, not so much by unknown speakers and flying visits, as by the argument of the talker on the spot who has got a fact or two to bring home to them. One may never hear from a correspondent for months on end, but one can depend that in most cases the correspondent is making good use of whatever literature reaches him, if it is only to pick out a single point or a single argument here or there. It is the telling argument or fact repeated from mouth to mouth that keeps the fire alight and rural hearts warm for Labour.

Training Presiding Officers, etc.

Question. Is there any system whereby returning officers hold conferences for the instruction of their deputies and presiding officers and poll clerks? It seems to me after my recent experiences that it is advisable that there should be some system whereby R.O's can satisfy themselves that those appointed know the law—know who ought to vote and ought not to vote at the various elections. It is no use merely for them to issue booklets to these officers which either they don't read, or, if they do, don't understand.

There seems need for a definite system of instruction, study and examination of all officers appointed to manage and conduct elections.

Answer. We are in the heartiest agreement with our correspondent's final conclusion. We have again and again pointed out the unsatisfactory nature of the Ballot Act provisions

which leave far too much discretion to returning officers, both in relation to the conduct of the poll and the conduct of the count. Suggestions have been put before the Labour Party and by them placed before the Government, which would improve the position in some respects. It is, however, extremely doubtful if legislation can be attempted in the near future, though it is to be hoped that in the Orders in Council which may be issued should the Electoral Reform Bill become law, some attempt will be made to deal with the situation. Obviously, however, such regulations would be confined to the scope of the Bill itself and would apply solely to elections where the method of the alternative vote was in operation.

There are no instructions in the Ballot Act which place compulsion upon the returning officer to ensure that his officials are qualified for their post, nor are there any penalties for ignorance or non-compliance, except that by Section II of the Ballot Act "every returning officer, presiding officer and clerk who is guilty of any wilful misfeasance, act or omission, in contravention of this Act shall, in addition to any other penalty or liability to which he may be subject forfeit to any person aggrieved by such misfeasance, act or omission, a penal sum not exceeding one hundred pounds."

We do not know what interpretation the Courts would place upon the meaning of the word "wilful" in relation to an act deliberately done in ignorance, but bearing in mind the interpretation which the judges placed upon the word "knowingly" in the Berwick Petition in relation to the acts of an election agent in exceeding the maximum of expenses, it is possible that pure ignorance of the law would not be accepted as an excuse for improper conduct. It is conceivable that the Courts would hold that the returning officer and the persons he employed *ought* to know their duties, and that sheer ignorance was no excuse for improper conduct. It must be remembered that the law very emphatically lays down that the returning officer "shall" provide, etc., and do such other acts and things as may be necessary for effectually conducting an election *in manner provided by this Act.*"

It is interesting to observe, however, that in the "Handbook for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks," published by Charles Knight and Co., and largely used as an instruction book for these

officers, the following significant paragraph appears :—

"Preliminary meeting.—A meeting of presiding officers and poll clerks may be arranged by the acting returning officer, on some day before the day of the poll; for the purpose of discussion and instruction. The R.P.A. has produced a great increase in the electorate, and therefore in the number of polling station officials, and also changes in procedure, including the introduction of women voters and proxy voting. Such a meeting will, therefore, be very advantageous. Uniformity of procedure is promoted, a certain amount of drilling in the duties can be done, and the contingencies that may arise can be considered. Officers of polling stations will make every effort to attend."

It is clear, therefore, that we are not alone in our opinion that it is the duty of the returning officer to instruct his staff and to take every necessary step to ensure their efficiency.

Unsatisfactory Polling Booths.

Question. Should there not be some uniform system of placing the actual polling booths. In one case a presiding officer — one of our opponents — placed these booths in a contrary manner to the method adopted in other places. Our people are suspicious that this was not done without a purpose.

Answer. There is not much information to go upon here, but the point concerning the actual arrangements of a polling station and the facing of the compartments has recently been the subject of some discussion among election agents, in which the writer took part. The objection then discussed was that there was a row of compartments in one fixture so placed that the voters went behind it and it was quite possible for two voters or more to be out of the observation of the returning officer, and for intimidation or collusion to take place behind the structure.

On the other hand with this same type of compartment in use and the backs of the voters to the presiding officer it may be quite possible for the latter, his clerk or a personation agent, when standing, to get a clear view, or at any rate a pretty good indication of how the voter is marking his paper.

Our own opinion is that *compartments should be separate*, and only one person allowed to attend a compartment at a time. They are best made entirely open so that a full view of the

person can be obtained, except that the desk portion should be screened on three sides. The voter should then be facing the presiding officer so that a full view of him can be obtained, except the act of marking the paper. This arrangement is unfortunately uncommon, and in the majority of places the spirit of the Act is infringed.

Rule 16 of the Ballot Act says, "each polling station shall be furnished with such number of compartments in which voters can mark their votes screened from observation as the returning officer thinks fit, so that at least one compartment be provided for every one hundred and fifty electors . . ."

The inference is quite clear that the compartments are separate and so is the further instruction in Rule 25 which says "that the elector on receiving the ballot paper shall forthwith *proceed into* one of the compartments in the polling station." (The italics are ours).

The implication here appears to be that the compartment will be almost like a telephone call box, and it will be something one goes *into* and not stands *at*. We should not object. Some presiding officers seem to assume that ballot papers must be marked under their observation, or at least so that they can see that it is being marked. There is no ground whatever for this presumption.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor.

Abnormal Numbers of Parliamentary Voters at One Address.

Sir,—On the East Islington current Register of Parliamentary Voters 115 names appear at No. 107, Highbury New Park, N.5, which is a boarding house in a first-class residential area. There is only one Local Government voter.

On the Finsbury Register at 88 Old Street, E.C., no less than 160 names appear. This is a Salvation Army Hostel. There are two Local Government voters.

Are these numbers exceeded anywhere in the kingdom?

Yours fraternally,

R. MONTFORD.

63, Highbury Hill,
London, N.5.

The Extended Agenda Again.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I was interested in your article in the "L.O." regarding friction on the E.C. We suffered in this direction very much for a number of years, and since we have made alterations, somewhat on the lines you have mentioned, but with the addition of the extended agenda, friction, obstruction and misunderstanding have been practically eliminated.

I introduced the extended agenda [referred to in our issue for September, 1930.—Ed. "L.O."] because I was of opinion that the cause of the trouble was the sudden introduction of controversial matter. The Secretary is probably saturated with the business of the meeting and has clear-cut ideas as to what should be done therefore; the members have the problem sprung upon them and become suspicious of the ready solution of the problem by the Secretary. Had they had as much time to think about it as the Secretary they would probably have come to the same conclusion as he, or at any rate would be prepared with an alternative without lengthy, unreasoned argument.

Our E.C. is divided into three sub-Committees:—Finance, Propaganda and Literature, Organisation. These sub-committees report to the full E.C. and, of course, can only act with their approval. The Organisation Committee is responsible for keeping contact with the Ward Committees. It consists of five members, and the area is

divided into five districts with an E.C. member for each district. By this arrangement, every member of the E.C. has a definite job and a definite interest.

The extended agenda idea should be a practical proposition for all except very small Parties, as the work involved in preparing this agenda is more than saved in time at the meeting—and afterwards—as well as helping considerably to create the Secretary's ideal—tremendous energy without friction or heat.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A. ROSE.

54, Henstead Road,
Southampton.

Is your Bookshelf Complete?

**A few bound copies
of the L.O. for 1931
are still on sale.**

Price 6/5 post free.

Apply the Editor.

ABERDEEN IN THE ONWARD MARCH.

From North, South, East and West comes news of the big push for individual membership. We learn from Aberdeen that three months ago the Aberdeen Trades and Labour Council set out to establish an individual membership scheme in the Granite City.

Aberdeen had never paid to Head Office for fees more than the minimum of thirty shillings. Already fifteen pounds has been paid for cards this year and the membership to-day reaches one thousand one hundred. Mr. G. R. McIntosh, the Secretary, informs us that things are looking well for the two thousand.

Under the scheme in operation fifty per cent. of the contributions are taken by the Central Party, i.e., Aberdeen Trades and Labour Council, twenty-five per cent. go to Ward Committee, and

twenty-five per cent to the collector. Our friends are finding that the employment of paid collectors is by far the best proposition, for they confess that entirely voluntary work has failed them.

We are interested to note too that a late Burgher of Carlisle, i.e., Mr. Matthew Herrington, of the N.U.R.,

has been instrumental in conveying Carlisle's example, reported by us last month, to Aberdeen where he now lives, and this example has both taught and stimulated.

The circular sent out at Aberdeen to supporters whom it is intended to canvass is as follows:—

ABERDEEN TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL

47, Belmont Street,
ABERDEEN.

URGENT and PERSONAL.

To Every Labour Supporter and Sympathiser.

In Aberdeen, at the General Election, Thirty Thousand Votes were recorded for the Labour Candidates. This was a splendid effort, and we want to thank you for your assistance and support. The Party is deeply grateful to each individual who helped to secure such a magnificent poll for Labour. But a single effort is not enough. We cannot get Labour Representation—either Municipal or Parliamentary—in Aberdeen unless we build up a strong and viable organisation. It is now only a necessary task—it is a wonderful one.

WILL YOU HELP US?

WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR A RUSH ELECTION
AND WE MUST HAVE FUNDS TO FIGHT IT!

So the Party in Aberdeen has started an Organisation Scheme. In future Individual Membership Contributions will be one penny per week. We ask every supporter to come in with us and make this sacrifice for the Cause. It is only a little, but if every Labour supporter in Aberdeen contributed a penny a week—Aberdeen would be safe for Labour!

We ask you to sign the form at the foot of this letter, and to get every member of your household who is willing to subscribe to do likewise. That is important! If you can give this small contribution of one penny, a collector will call for it every week. You will have no trouble yourself. You will get a Special Receipt Stamp for your donation, and you will know that you are doing YOUR bit in the building up of a great and living Movement. All monies collected will be spent locally in the work of increasing Labour Representation. The attached form will be called for in the course of a few days, and we do hope that you will fill it up and so let us get on with that great work for freedom and progress to which the Party has set its hands.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Council and Party,

W. URQUHART, Acting Chairman.

G. R. McINTOSH, Secretary.

To the Secretary,

Aberdeen Trades & Labour Council.

I am willing to join the Labour Party, and shall be glad to pay one penny per week as Individual Membership Contribution.

Signature

Address

THE LABOUR PARTY

League of Youth

Monthly Bulletin

EDITOR :

W. ARTHUR PEACOCK.

No. 12 (NEW SERIES)

JUNE, 1931

National Youth Camp

**SPEND YOUR HOLIDAYS WITH YOUR FRIENDS.
CAMP WITH YOUR COMRADES.**

A National Youth Camp is to be held at Withyham, Sussex, during the first week of August.

This important decision has been made by the National Advisory Committee of the League of Youth. Such great success has attended the various camps run by local Leagues and so keen is the interest in camping and hiking among League members that it feels members will welcome this opportunity to meet each other and to spend their holidays together.

In the first place it is well to mention that the Camping Bureau of the National Advisory Committee has no equipment of its own and will act only as a co-ordinating body between the various camping sections each of which is appealed to, to come to Withyham.

The Camping Bureau is anxious that secretaries will favour it with information concerning the equipment they possess and it will be generally helpful if Paul Williams, Camping Bureau, League of Youth, Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1, is forwarded the following particulars immediately:—

1. **Whether your Camping Section will come to Withyham.**
2. **What equipment can be brought.**
3. **Will a stay be made for the week or for the week-end only.**
4. **How many members of the branch can attend.**
5. **What accommodation can be placed at the disposal of the National Advisory Committee for the use of unattached campers not possessing their own equipment.**

Individual campers possessing equipment are asked also to let Mr. Williams know if they can attend and to give details of equipment they can bring.

Unattached campers having no equipment are asked to send in early intimation if they wish to attend so that efforts may be made to fix them up.

No definite promises can be made in this connection but the members of the Bureau will do all they can to see that everybody who wishes to come to the Camp is accommodated.

The National Advisory Committee hopes that this first National Camp will be warmly supported. It asks every League that can come to Withyham to do so. It will give opportunity for discussions to be held about League matters, it will help to foster new friendships, and will help us all to know each other better than we do. It will provide a unique opportunity for pleasure to be combined with politics. There are lots of villages near at hand where propaganda ought to be carried on. Let the cry be raised, therefore, in all assemblies of League members—**August at Withyham.** Camp with your comrades and show that you know that "Fellowship is Life."

Information about camping will always be gladly given by the Camping Bureau, L.O.Y., Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1. Local Leagues having camps not mentioned in previous issues of the Bulletin should send in full particulars to the Editor immediately so that early publication may be obtained. News of Camp activities is always welcomed.

Things We Hear

MANY members of the League of Youth would doubtlessly welcome the opportunity to correspond with young people in other countries. Mr. Creech Jones, the Organising Secretary of the Workers' Travel Association, was recently in Holland and while there met a number of Dutch young Socialists who are anxious to get into touch with English people. "Can you do anything to help us through your Labour Party League of Youth?" they said.

Those interested should write Mr. Jacobsen, Secretary, Ald., Ned. Bond van Handels-en-Kantvorbedientch, Weteringschans, 251, Amsterdam.

* * *

The Leeds Youth Advisory Committee is always active. Lately it convened a meeting for League of Youth Presidents and Secretaries and other officers. As a result it has been decided to run a course of eight weekly lectures dealing with the conduct of meetings, and expression in speech and writing. If the eight lectures are successful a further course will be run in the autumn.

* * *

The Balham and Tooting League has made great progress recently, membership being about 40 now and funds in hand amount to four pounds. A concert held recently was very successful, and a good show was given by the League dramatic group. Debates have been held with the Central Wandsworth League and a public speaking class is being held in conjunction with the N.C.L.C.

* * *

The Annual Meeting of the Surrey Labour Federation is to be held at the William Morris Labour Hall, Merton Road, Wimbledon, on Saturday, June 27th, at 2-30 p.m. Miss Doris Hagger will preside. After the general meeting a public rally will be held in the same hall when it is expected that there will be national speakers.

* * *

Members of the League are reminded that the Bulletin appears firstly in the columns of "The Labour Organiser," a journal dealing with matters of

organisation, electoral work, and general Labour Party activities. This should be of great aid to League officials who should take steps to become subscribers. Mr. Drinkwater, Labour Organiser, Ladywood, Fernhill Heath, Nr. Worcester, will give particulars to all who write to him.

* * *

Readers of "The Bulletin" will remember that two months ago we published the prize-winning entries in our Literary Competition. One of these, which was highly commended, was from the pen of Miss Nora Crowther, of Hebden Bridge, Yorks. In acknowledging receipt of her prize, Miss Crowther says, "I wrote the essay whilst I was in the Royal Halifax Infirmary. My fellow patients and nurses were quite amused with me because I was so fond of writing. I wish that I could inform them of the result of my labour."

We congratulate Miss Crowther upon her success and all the more because of the great difficulties under which her essay was written. We hope she will enjoy good health in the days to come and that it may be our pleasure to publish other articles from her pen. With her, we wish, too, that her fellow patients and nurses could know of her success. She did well, indeed!

—

To the list of camping sections given in our last issue there must be added the Teddington League of Youth. Their camp has been open since Whitsun and welcomes visitors each weekend. Charges for visitors are: weekend, tea Saturday to tea Sunday, 3/3. Separate meals: breakfast 9d., dinner 1/-, tea 6d., supper 9d.

"Our food," declares the local secretary, "is cooked by experts. Our camp is ideal. Music is supplied by our own orchestra." A letter to Henry Jones, 44, Fulwell Road, Teddington, Middlesex, will bring you the leaflet stating full particulars of this camp.

The Wealdstone League has also issued a leaflet in praise of its camp. It gives full particulars of cost and a map to help campers to find the site. This may be had from Miss Molly Sayers.

It is essential that those readers who frequent these camps should bring their own feather beds and hot water bottles.

Join Your Union

Every member of the League of Youth should belong to a trade union. In the following article a veteran trade unionist tells of the achievements of trades unionism during his lifetime. "I cannot give you," he writes, "the recipe for long life except to say 'keep from dying,' but I can tell you how best to defend yourself."

WHEN I started work I was ten years old. I worked eighty hours a week for 2/6. My stepfather earned 12/- a week and worked eighty hours per week, yet he taught himself to read. He knew a good bit of history and events in his own time. When I grumbled about my work he used to tell me I was lucky. He told me how not long before children of five years of age were working in cotton factories and mines and were ill-treated. They worked twelve hours a day. They lived in sheds and slept on straw. The straw was never cold because as one lot of children got up, the next shift came to sleep, the sleep of exhaustion. If these kiddies fell asleep at their job, the foreman had a whip to waken them, or perhaps plunged them in a tub of icy cold water.

Aye, things have changed, but it's a pity that the young folk in our movement don't stop to think how the changes have been brought about.

As a kiddie I learned lots of things from my stepfather, for instance, he told me about Peterloo in 1819, and other instances of cruel repression.

For the Cause.

In 1834 farmers in Dorsetshire induced the local magistrates to issue placards warning labourers that anyone joining a trade union would be prosecuted. Two brothers named Loveless and four others were arrested and lodged in goal. Eventually they were transported. For their trade union activity these men suffered the horrors of the convict ship, separation from their families and the stigma of the criminal.

It was the history of these struggles, with the suffering, pain, torture and death meted out to the stalwarts of the past, together with the conditions of which I had personal experience that made me a fighter. I have been batoned and gaoled for playing a humble part in the carrying on the work of the old stalwarts, like the Lovelesses, to build a strong Trade Union movement. I have lived long enough to see what Trade Unionism has done. Younger folks do not fully

appreciate how much it has accomplished; that is why there are so many non-unionists.

Yes! in my lifetime I have seen wages raised from 12/- to to-day's level. Working hours have been reduced from 80 to 48 and under. These things have been won by the trade unions. They have cared for their members in times of unemployment, sickness, accident and old age. From 1921 to 1929 trade unions paid over twenty million pounds to unemployed members, over seven million pounds in sick and accident benefit, nine million pounds in superannuation benefit and nearly three million pounds in funeral benefits.

Scores of thousands of pounds have also been paid to members in distress and in providing legal aid. Every day cases are being fought on behalf of members injured at work, and I know of instances where the insurance company has tried to settle with the member for £100 but the Union has secured from five to ten times that amount without any charge to the member.

Practical Benefits.

Members have had all this help and protection for between 1d. and 2d. per day. But there is more to tell. From 1913 to 1929 the Unions paid £13,406,795 in dispute pay to members fighting to improve their standard of life and yours.

Now I put it to you, if you are not in a union—

You are accepting wages and conditions which have been fought for by others and you are not sharing in the struggle to defend or to improve those wages and conditions.

You are not protecting yourself and your dependents should misfortune arise.

You are not helping to establish still better working conditions for your children and future generations.

You cannot afford to stand alone. Line up with your fellows and join a trade union. It will help you to fight the battle of life. If you do not know which union you should join get into touch with your local trades council. Its secretary will put you right.

Branch News

The Enfield branch reports that in twelve months its membership has trebled. The League programme consists of debates, questionnaires, discussions and addresses by well-known local people.

Co-operation is effected with local Leagues and this contributes considerably towards the success of social functions.

Wandsworth again reports upon the month's work. Mr. Snowden's announcement on the Land Tax gave added interest to Mr. Verinder's lecture on "The Burden of the Rates." Equal interest was shown, too, in the debates upon the Government's Transport Bill, and upon its general record.

The Wandsworth secretary concludes his monthly circular by commenting—

"Please destroy this letter immediately you receive it so that when you forget some of these dates you will have nothing to remind you of them."

We hope his humour is appreciated!

Election Stories

BEWARE of the heckler is advice to which all speakers will do well to give heed.

A well-known Socialist was addressing a street-corner meeting held to celebrate his adoption as a Labour candidate in a by-election.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began. "I am glad to be Labour's standard bearer at this election. I say that with a knowledge of all classes and all parties. I have been a rich man and I have been a poor man. Yes! my friends, there was an occasion in my life when I was worth nearly one hundred thousand pounds on one day while on the day following I was as poor as any of you."

"Lord, gov'nor," cried a man in the crowd. "If you did that with your own money what the hell are you going to do with ours?"

* * *

Here is a story of an amusing blunder made by a speaker at a Tory meeting in Yorkshire which was held about the time of the Grand National race meeting.

In opening the meeting the Chairman said, "Before we listen to our candidate this evening, I feel sure that you, ladies and gentlemen, will wish to pass a resolution of congratulation to our

beloved Sovereign on his recovery from a very severe illness. This resolution is one which needs no seconder. I ask you to stand and sing together the first and last verses of The Grand National."

* * *

Another amusing incident was told to me by a friend who was canvassing in a working-class constituency in Belfast. At one house at which he called he was asked to step inside. In the passage he noticed a picture of King William of Orange on the wall faced by a picture of the Pope on the other. This struck him as rather comical and he ventured to remark to the housewife that it was rather unusual to see these two pictures hanging together.

"Well, ye see, it's like this," said the woman. "Me man's an Orangeman and sure I'm a good Catholic."

"And how do you get along together?" enquired the canvasser.

"Shure," was the reply, "we get along all right all the year round till it comes to the 12th July. He gets drunk then and comes home and smashes the Pope to bits."

"And what do you do?"

"Shure, I don't do nothing at all till the fit's over. Then I go and pawn King Billy and buy a new Pope."

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